United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/793
20 December 1990

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council asks Secretary-General for "urgent" new efforts to monitor situation of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation; Council statement supports international conference on Middle East "at an appropriate time".

- Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions Abdulrahim A. Farah to retire on 31 December; to be succeeded by James O.C. Jonah.

- Administrative and Budgetary Committee recommends financing for four peace-keeping operations; approves adjustment of General Service salaries.

- Japan donates some $7.9 million to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees for purchase of flour.

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The Security Council this afternoon requested the Secretary-General to make "new efforts" on an "urgent basis" to monitor and observe the situation of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation.

Following some two months of debate and consultations, the Council unanimously adopted a resolution that also called upon the high contracting parties to the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention (on the protection of civilians in time of war) to ensure respect by Israel for its obligations under the Convention. It further requested the Secretary-General to develop the idea of convening a meeting of those parties to discuss possible measures that might be taken by them under the Convention.

The Secretary-General was asked to submit a first progress report to the Council by the first week of March 1991, and every four months thereafter.

An original version of today's resolution, first circulated in the Council on 27 November by Colombia, Cuba, Malaysia and Yemen and later revised three times in the course of consultations described by delegates today as "arduous" and protracted", contained operative paragraphs by which the Council would have decided on the deployment of military observers in the occupied

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territories and welcomed the call for convening an international peace conference.

Before the vote on the resolution, the President of the Council, Abdalla Saleh Al-Ashtal (Yemen), delivered a statement on behalf of Council members indicating agreement that an international conference on the Middle East, "at an appropriate time, properly structured, should facilitate efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict". However, through the statement, the Council also indicated that there "is no unanimity as to when would be the appropriate time for such a conference".

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Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar announced today, through his spokesman, that Abdulrahim A. Farah, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship, would be retiring effective 31 December 1990. Mr. Farah will be succeeded by James O.C. Jonah, who is at present serving as Assistant Secretary-General, Office for Research and the Collection of Information. The Secretary-General's spokesman told news correspondents that the Secretary-General would like to express his deep sense of gratitude to Mr. Farah for the most distinguished service he has rendered to the Organization as a member of the Secretariat since 1972.

Alvaro de Soto, Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General, is to succeed Mr. Jonah and will continue to serve as the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for the peace process in Central America. Mr. de Soto's present duties will be assumed by Jean-Claude Aime, Acting Assistant Secretary-General.

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The Government of Japan has agreed to grant the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) some $7.9 million for the purchase of flour for distribution by the Agency to Palestine refugees.

The agreement has been signed at the Agency's headquarters in Vienna by UNRWA Commissioner-General Giorgio Giacomelli and Tetsuya Endo, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations Vienna Office.

The Japanese grant will cover the purchase of American flour and the cost of shipping it to UNRWA's area of operations. The flour will be used by UNRWA in its regular programme for Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Israeli-occupied territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Japan is one of the biggest single donors to UNRWA's regular and emergency programmes, and this year contributed $15 million to the Agency's regular budget for education, health and relief and social programmes for the refugees.

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Appropriations for four United Nations peace-keeping operations -- in the Golan Heights, Lebanon, Iran-Iraq and Central America -- were approved last night by the General Assembly's Administrative and Budgetary Committee. The related draft resolutions, all approved without a vote, would authorize the Secretary-General to enter into maximum monthly commitments to keep the operations running into the next biennium.

Also last night, the Committee approved, without a vote, a draft resolution by which the salaries of United Nations General Service staff would be adjusted to levels consistent with the "best prevailing rates of remuneration" as determined by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). The draft text, which concerned recommendations of the Commission, would also have the Assembly approve the revised scale of gross and net salaries for Professional and higher staff as of 1 March 1991.

Several Committee members expressed concern about possible legal consequences of the action concerning General Service salaries, while others felt it was the correct course to take.

In other action last night, the Committee approved appropriations of $4.3 million to cover operations of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) through 2 August next year.

It also approved a draft by which the Assembly would request that Member countries pay their outstanding and current assessed contributions in full and on time, and would take note of the Secretary-General's proposal for an increase in the Working Capital Fund.

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United Nations

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DH/794
21 December 1990

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- General Assembly suspends forty-fifth session after electing new High Commissioner for Refugees, requesting consultations on special assistance to Haiti, and dealing with budgetary matters.

- Security Council to examine alternative arrangements for financing peace-keeping force in Cyprus.

- Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Haiti calls recent elections "very successful".

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The General Assembly elected Sadako Ogata (Japan) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a term of three years beginning 1 January 1991. Mrs. Ogata, currently the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo, will fill the vacancy created when Thorvald Stoltenberg of Norway resigned from his post on 2 November to become his country's Foreign Minister.

Acting without a vote on the recommendation of its Second Committee (Economic and Financial), the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consult with the Government of Haiti concerning appropriate iniatives for the launching of a special programme of assistance, and to report to it on the outcome of those consultations.

On the recommendations of its Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), the Assembly adopted the proposed 1992-1997 medium-term plan for the Organization and approved revised 1990-1991 budget appropriations of $1,146,755,100. It took that action by adopting, without a vote, all the reports of the Fifth Committee, with the exception of one on the administrative and budgetary aspects of peace-keeping operations. Action on that report -- which had earlier today been approved by a recorded vote of the Fifth Committee -- was deferred until a later date, along with other agenda items, as the Assembly suspended its forty-fifth session.

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This morning the Assembly decided, without a vote, to hold the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 1 to 12 June 1992, and urged that representation be at the level of Head of State or Government.

Also on the recommendation of its Economic and Financial Committee, the Assembly decided to establish a single intergovernmental negotiating process for the preparation of an effective framework convention on climate change, which should be completed in time for signature at the 1992 Conference.

Further, the Assembly proclaimed the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, starting on 1 January 1991, and adopted the International Development Strategy for the Decade. The main aim of the strategy is to ensure that the 1990s is a decade of both accelerated development in the developing countries and strengthened international co-operation.

In all, 54 resolutions recommended by the Economic Committee were adopted by the Assembly. They dealt among other things with restructuring the United Nations bodies concerned with drug problems; external indebtedness; the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident; special assistance to the front-line States in Africa; special economic and disaster relief assistance; inclusion of Liberia in the list of least developed countries; and United Nations operational activities for development.

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The Security Council this afternoon decided to examine the problem of the financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and to report by 1 June 1991 on alternative arrangements for meeting its costs.

In a resolution adopted unanimously, the Council further decided to consider the possibility of meeting the United Nations portion of the costs of the Force through the use of assessed, rather than voluntary, contributions. Such a change might be put into effect simultaneously with the next extension of UNFICYP's mandate.

Earlier this month, the Council renewed the mandate of UNFICYP for six months, until 15 June 1991. Both the Secretary-General and a review team sent to Cyprus have concluded in separate reports that the present means of financing UNFICYP was inadequate, leaving the Trust Fund for the Force deeply in debt and placing an unfair burden on countries contributing troops.

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The Secretary-General's Personal Representative for Haiti, Joao Augusto de Medicis, told news correspondents in New York today that the recent presidential elections in Haiti were "very successful". Although they had proceeded "without any violent incident in the whole country", he said, there were some logistical and organizational problems, but these had not affected the elections.

Mr. de Medicis concluded that the elections were "a great step towards democracy in that country and a great step towards the normalization of the situation in Haiti".

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27 December 1990

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council terminates Trusteeship Agreement for three entities of United States-administered Trust Territory of Pacific Islands.

- Secretary-General says in end-of-year message that abiding problems stand forth even more clearly as political rivalry and confrontation diminish on a global scale.

- President of Security Council asks Council members to implement Sanctions Committee recommendations appealing to all States to provide immediate technical, financial and material assistance to countries affected by embargo against Iraq and Kuwait.

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The Security Council on Saturday, 22 December, voted to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement for three of the four entities comprising the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which has been administered by the United States since 1947.

By a vote of 14 in favour to 1 against (Cuba), with no abstentions, the Council adopted resolution 683 (1990) concluding the Agreement with respect to the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, which had drawn up Compacts of Free Association with the United States, and with the Northern Mariana Islands, which had agreed to a Commonwealth Covenant with the Administering Authority. The fourth entity -- Palau -- has still not determined the nature of its future status with the Administering Authority and therefore remains under the Trusteeship Agreement.

Before the vote on the resolution, the Council voted by 2 in favour (Colombia, Cuba) to 9 against (Canada, China, Finland, France, Malaysia, Romania, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, United States), with 4 abstentions (Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Yemen, Zaire) against a proposal by Cuba to postpone consideration of this item until Tuesday, 8 January.

Explaining his negative vote against the resolution, the representative of Cuba, Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, said the Council had dismissed a formal

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request by one of the entities concerned, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and had taken a decision notwithstanding. Not to have waited a couple of weeks before taking a decision, after having waited more than 40 years, was difficult to understand and inadmissible. There was continued disagreement, he said, over fundamental issues of sovereignty between the United States and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. The Council had decided to abandon its compliance with very clear-cut obligations, the Cuban representative said.

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The year 1990 brought to the United Nations broadened vistas and new and profound challenges, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar stated in his end-of-year message.

He said the Organization's perspectives had widened and deepened as statesmen, the world over, had reidentified and confirmed the central role of the United Nations in advancing international co-operation and the common goal of peace with justice. As envisioned by the framers of the Charter, the major challenges facing mankind were increasingly being brought to the Organization for appraisal, consultation and action, Mr. Perez de Cuellar said.

As political rivalry and confrontation diminished on a global scale, the Secretary-General said, the abiding problems, however, were standing forth even more clearly. He cited economic and social disparity, gross invasions of fundamental human rights, grave and growing threats to the environment and bitter regional conflicts as problems which still prevailed. He added that the peoples of the world now looked to the United Nations with increased expectations.

The United Nations had long been a principal deliberative forum. With regard to the crisis in the Middle East, the Organization had increasingly become a vehicle for operation and action, the Secretary-General stated. He added that the Organization was adapting its structures and attitudes to new perceptions of its role in a changed world.

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The President of the Security Council, Abdalla Saleh Al-Ashtal of Yemen, has informed the Secretary-General in a letter that he has asked the Council to implement recommendations submitted to him by the Sanctions Committee.

The Sanctions Committee was established by the Council in connection with resolution 661 of 6 August imposing trade sanctions against Iraq and Kuwait, to examine countries' requests for assistance enabling them to carry economic losses stemming from those sanctions.

In two reports, submitted to the Council President on 19 and 21 December, the Committee appealed to all States on an urgent basis to provide immediate technical, financial and material assistance to Bulgaria, Tunisia, Romania, India, Yugoslavia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Czechoslovakia,

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Poland, Mauritania, Pakistan, the Sudan, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Bangladesh and Seychelles to mitigate the adverse impact on their economies of the sanctions.

The Committee also invited the competent organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the international financial institutions and the regional development banks, to review their programmes of assistance to those countries in order to alleviate the present economic hardships. Further, it requested the Secretary-General to seek information from States and the concerned organs and agencies of the United Nations system on action taken to alleviate these economic problems and to report to the Security Council.

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31 December 1990

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General expresses deep concern over clashes in Gaza Strip in which Palestinians are killed and injured by Israeli security forces.

- President of General Assembly to visit Palestine refugees, 2-7 January.

- Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire to succeed Abdalla Saleh Al-Ashtal of Yemen as President of Security Council for month of January.

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The Spokesman for Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar today issued a statement stating that the Secretary-General is deeply concerned by the clashes which took place in the Gaza Strip over the weekend in which Palestinians were shot and killed and many were injured by Israeli security forces. The Spokesman said Mr. Perez de Cuellar had asked the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for information concerning the incidents that occurred in the refugee camps.

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Guido de Marco (Malta), President of the forty-fifth General Assembly session, will visit Palestine refugee camps in the occupied Arab territories and Jordan from 2 to 7 January, in order to highlight humanitarian aspects of the refugees' plight.

The President will arrive in Tel Aviv, Israel, on 2 January, where he will join the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Giorgio Giacomelli, who will accompany the President during the six-day visit.

On Thursday, 3 January, the President will meet with the Foreign Minister of Israel, David Levy, before departing for Gaza, where he will be briefed by UNRWA officials. While in Gaza, the President will tour Jabalia Camp, lunch with Palestinian notables, visit Beach Camp, Al Ahli Hospital and Bureij Camp, and meet with Gaza residents.

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On Friday, 4 January, the President will meet with the Mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, and then tour the West Bank. After meeting with leaders of the Palestinian Women's Association at the UNRWA Field Office, he will visit Jalazone Camp. He will also meet the Mayor of Bethlehem, Mr. Freij, after which he will visit Dheisheh Camp.

On Saturday, 5 January, the President will travel to Amman, Jordan, where he will meet with Crown Prince Hassan and other senior Jordanian officials. He will also visit UNRWA installations in Jordan as well as the Baqa'a Camp. On Sunday, the President will continue visiting camps and UNRWA installations in Jordan. President de Marco will return to Malta on Monday, 7 January, via Cairo and Rome.

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In accordance with the principle of alphabetical rotation, Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya (Zaire) will succeed Abdalla Saleh Al-Ashtal (Yemen) as President of the Security Council. He will take office tomorrow, 1 January 1991.

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